

Saint Bernardine of Siena



by Mary Helen Allies

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A Prophet with the Mantle of Elias

There was more than an ordinary connection between Saint Vincent Ferrer and the Saint who shares with Saint Catherine the patronage of the city of Siena. In 1408, that is in the tenth year of his own ministry, when the great Spanish Apostle was preaching at Alexandria in Lombardy, he foretold that his mantle should descend upon one who was then listening to him, and he bequeathed to this Eliseus those parts of Italy which his ardent voice was not to reach. Know, my children," these were the words of his prophetic spirit, "that there is amongst you a religious of Saint Francis, who will shortly become famous throughout Italy. His doctrine and example will produce great fruit in the Christian people. And although he is young and I am old, a time will nevertheless come when the Roman Church will exalt him in preference to me. I therefore exhort you to return thanks to God, and to ask Him to fulfill what He has revealed to me for the good of the Christian people. Because of this future ministry, I shall return to preach in Spain and France, and bequeath to him the evangelizing of the remaining peoples of Italy which I cannot undertake."

The successor thus formally designated by Saint Vincent was Bernardine of Siena, one of those chosen souls who from their youth upwards have borne the sweet yoke of Jesus Christ in perfect innocence of mind and heart. If in other lives women have proved a snare and a temptation, they had a special mission to the childhood of one whom God had chosen for so important an inheritance. Their piety indeed sheds an aroma over Bernardine's early years which prepares us for the future triumphs of his sanctity. Is it not true to say that the pure of heart are endowed by God with singular strength for coping with sin and vice, or that purity

is in itself the most powerful weapon against all that is not pure? For in its Christian meaning it is no negative or passive virtue, but one, which even in the holiest life is acquired, if we may so speak, at the point of the sword.

Bernardine's parents, called Tollo and Nera Dini, were both noble; his father belonged to the ancient family of the Albiceschi, and was a citizen of Siena, whilst his mother was a native of Massa. Tollo had received a most honourable mission from the Sienese Republic, that of Governor of Massa, a town situated at about thirty miles from Siena. It was there that Nera gave birth to Bernardine on the 8th of September, 1380. The little child, who came into the world upon the same day as our Blessed Lady, did not long enjoy the protecting arms of his parents. Nera was called away in 1383, and three years later Tollo followed his young wife of twenty-two to Heaven. At six consequently Bernardine was an orphan, and from that time a succession of holy women supplied the place of his natural guardians, and guarded all his steps with that calm watchfulness which is peculiar to holiness. His Aunt Diana was the first of the number, and for the space of five years Bernardine remained at Massa under her protection. What that protection was is exemplified in her great solicitude as to the kind of society with which her little nephew should mix. She would often say to him: "You will learn goodness with the good, but the unjust will turn you away from God," and true to this maxim, she would suffer him to frequent only those places which offered no temptation to his eyes or ears. Purity and charity are sister virtues. One day when Diana had barely sufficient bread as a provision for her household, she refused a poor man who came to beg for food. "Pray, pray," said little Bernardine, "do not send him away, and I promise you to go without my supper to-night to make up for it." Of this Saint, as of Saint Vincent, we are told that from the early years of his boyhood he excelled, in letters, and that he had a fondness for

preaching the sermons which he had heard to other boys. When he was only eleven his Aunt Diana died, and Bernardine was adopted by Cristoforo and Pia, his wife, who belonged to the Albiceschi family, and lived at Siena. Up to that time his studies had principally consisted in grammar; a wide term in those days, but on his arrival at Siena, he made the acquaintance of a famous master, John of Spoleto, who besides being a great professor of philosophy, was renowned for his goodness. When Bernardine had made steady progress in secular learning under John's guidance, he gave himself up to the study of canon law and that of the Holy Scriptures, and compared to the others this latter science seemed to him the one thing necessary. He spent three years on his religious education, and all that time Pia followed in the footsteps of his Aunt Diana, watching over him to keep off the faintest breath of evil. His companions well knew with whom they had to deal, for the announcement "Here comes Bernardine" would act as a complete check upon unguarded conversation.

To bring his body into subjection the Saint fasted rigorously from his earliest years, and he never omitted this practice on a Saturday as the day specially consecrated to our Lady, whom he regarded as his Mother and particular Patroness. For devotion to her was one of his most striking characteristics, and often, when quite a little boy, his Aunt Diana used to find him out before her statue, saying the most loving things to his dear Queen. But now his cousin Tobia, Diana's daughter, added fresh fuel to his ardour for God's service. She is the third woman of more than ordinary holiness whom we meet in Bernardine's life. After her husband's death, she became a tertiary of Saint Francis, and managed the hospital for sick women, who were strangers at Siena. Her piety was deep and true, founded upon austerity and mortification, and Bernardine was accustomed to look upon her as his mother, seeing her very often and receiving

spiritual consolation from her intercourse. Like Diana and Pia, Tobia had his innocence so much at heart that she prayed most earnestly to God to keep him free from all evil desires and sensual love. What, therefore, was her trepidation to hear Bernardine one day say to her: "I am in love. I should die if I could not easily see my beloved." Sometimes he announced his intention of going to see his beloved one, "who was nobler and more beautiful than all the girls in Siena." He furthermore told the troubled Tobia that he should not sleep at night if he had not looked upon the likeness of his lady during the day. She thought he was alluding to an ordinary girl, whereas he spoke of the most glorious Mother of God, whose likeness in the splendour of her Assumption he used to contemplate over one of the gates of Siena. Tobia did not guess the true object of his affections, yet seeing him persevere in his life of austere penance, she resolved to watch Bernardine, without being seen herself, as he came in and went out of the Camelian Gate, for there, as he had once told her, he rendered homage to his lady. But her trouble was transformed into gladness when she beheld him kneeling in the joy of his heart before our Lady. Still she wished to hear the truth from Bernardine's own lips, so she said to him, "My beloved son, I ask you not to keep me any longer in suspense, nor to let me be troubled on your account. Tell me who it is that you love, that if she be of our rank we may secure her hand for you." And Bernardino quickly answered: "As you desire it, mother, I will lay open to you my secret heart as I would do to no other. I am in love with the Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of God, whom I have always cherished. Being on fire with love for her, I have espoused her as a most chaste spouse in whom I have placed all my hope. Loving and desiring her so much, I could wish to look upon her, but as I cannot obtain this grace here below, I have resolved to visit her likeness every day. So now you know who it is I love."

During the time of this holy intercourse with Tobia, Bernardine must have been living with Cristoforo and Pia till he conceived an ardent desire to join the Confraternity of Disciplinists, established at Siena, in the great hospital of Sancta Maria de Scala. It seems to have been a kind of third order, whereof the members preserved community life, and it had been the spiritual cradle of many holy men, but Bernardine became the fairest ornament of our Lady's house. There it was that uniting the consolations of prayer to the heroism of active charity he laid up a provision of strength for the terrible days of suffering which were so near. When the plague came, the brotherhood of Sancta Maria de Scala helped him to appear before the Sienese world as a "newly rising star in the midst of a clouded time." In 1400, Siena was visited by the pestilence. It is hard in the comfortable routine of our lives to form an idea of the periodical visitations of the plague in the Middle Ages. One of its most deplorable features was the want of respect for the dead which it fostered, for so soon did the pestilence produce death and the most loathsome corruption that the nearest relatives of the deceased would allow their bodies to lie unburied till a neighbour insisted on their removal by paying a sum of money. They were then hurried into the ground without any pretence of a funeral rite or ceremony. Commerce and the business of life stopped in the cities, which presented rather the appearance of churchyards, strewn with dead bodies in various stages of decay. It was a time of prosperity for those trades only which could minister to the wants of the trembling survivors, or which could help to bury speedily and with least exposure to contagion the putrid dead. In some places a tenth of the population alone survived, and we are told that Siena lost eighty thousand inhabitants in four months. The Hospital of our Lady de Scala was filled with the fetid smell which this peculiar death produced. More than one hundred and forty of the brethren had succumbed in ministering to the wants of their

sick, and the plague-stricken patients moaned over their lonely wretchedness. The Prior of the hospital prayed earnestly to our Lady to send him some devoted helpers, when Bernardine, who had been silently pondering over the words "greater charity than this no man hath than to give his life for his friends," came forward, and in the fire and freshness of his twenty years, offered himself as a willing victim to nurse the untold pains of those poor sufferers. No doubt the greatness of the sacrifice answered that secret need which he felt of giving something to God.

The Prior after he had expressed pity for the blooming youth, who in the natural order of things was going to certain death, would not oppose his desire, but established him as superintendent of the infirmary, where Bernardine's words and example quickly produced imitators. "What is greater or more beautiful," he said to his companions, "than in time of peace to attain to the martyr's crown." Thus by a corporal work of heroic mercy he preluded the far nobler ministry to spiritual needs which he was later to undertake. Not unfrequently it is through kindness to a sick body that access is finally obtained to the more diseased soul. The Saint spent four months at the Hospital in tender and unwearied care of its patients, applying medicaments and nursing with his own hands, and sometimes burying the dead, but although many of his companions fell victims to their charity, God did not reward him with that crown which had been perhaps an incentive to so much devotedness. When the plague had almost worked out its fury, God sent him four months of sickness exactly corresponding to the time he had spent with the sick, which unthinking men might view as a strange kind of reward for his charity, but of him it might be said that in weakness he received additional strength. When he was once more restored to health, he pondered deeply and often upon the advantages of the religious life, hesitating between the Orders of Saint Dominic

and Saint Francis. A dream confirmed him in his own secret preference for the Friars Minor. He thought he was in a large and uncultivated field wherein stood a lofty tower. In the tower he saw a window from whence flames were issuing, and in their midst a woman with dishevelled hair and outstretched hands, who uttered thrice in a loud voice the name of Francis. The explanation of the dream seemed to point to the field as an image of the world, to the tower as God, to the flames as typifying the Holy Spirit, whilst the woman represented the Church. Bernardine resolved to become a Franciscan, but there was still another care in the world which he suffered to come between him and the accomplishment of his vocation. His father's sister, Tolla Bartolomea, was very old and infirm. Lying on her bed she would sing the divine praises with great joy, till she lost her voice, and she was so intimately united to our Lord that at the mention of the Holy Name of Jesus, she became rapt as if in ecstasy. Bernardine had always cherished her for her holiness and good counsels and now at the age of ninety-seven (another biographer makes her rather less) she was entirely helpless, not being able to move in her bed, and had become deaf and dumb. The loss of her attendant about this time was supplied by Bernardine, who waited upon her himself with patient care as long as she lived, which was more than a year. When he had closed her eyes, he retired into great solitude, where, as the prophet says, God speaks to the heart, in order to prepare for his future career. Before bidding farewell to secular life he carried out the evangelical maxim, "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give it to the poor," lest the outward attractions of the world should bias his choice, and on the 8th of September, his twenty-second birthday, he received the habit of poverty at the hands of Father John Ristorio. This venerable Father, himself in the reputation of sanctity, had a presentiment concerning the novice's future greatness, for as he gave the poor habit and rough cord of Saint Francis to Bernardine, he

exclaimed, "Today a valiant soldier is given to us who will gather most abundant fruit into the Lord's garner."

Bernardine passed his year of novitiate apart from the tumult of the world in the midst of woody groves at Columbaria, a place in the neighbourhood of Siena. His brother novices seem to have been specially struck by two qualities in him, his rigorous austerity to himself, and his cordial sweetness to others, which are equally needful to an apostle. The one he fed by his constant meditation of the Passion till his heart was on fire with divine love, the second, perhaps a consequence of the first, made him eager to seek humiliating occupations for himself, and in his tenderness towards the needy, he would walk miles barefooted to carry them bread and wine. He was ordained, as it appears, shortly after his profession, though the custom of the time generally fixed the reception of the priesthood at the age of thirty. Whether it was likewise according to the practice of the age to delay the saying of Mass, we do not know, but Bernardine offered up the Holy Sacrifice for the first time a whole year after his ordination. He did not at once become famous, perhaps his intense humility kept the candlestick under the bushel. However in spite of himself, two incidents occurred which were a revelation of his mission. His loving meditation of the Passion produced in him a burning desire not only to find out what would be most pleasing to God, but also, which does not always follow, to do it whatever it might cost. In a rapture of love and ardent thirst for souls, he one day seized a heavy cross and carried it on his bare shoulders from Columbaria to Arezzo, and there he preached to the people in his father's tongue, that is, not so much with human science as with heavenly-inspired words after the fashion of Saint Francis, his patriarch. This was a revelation, and in consequence of it he received orders to preach. But there was a natural impediment in the way of it, for Bernardine, besides his delicate health, suffered from hoarseness and could not make his voice heard. He prayed

to God in simplicity to deliver him from this infirmity through the intercession of our Lady if it were really His will that he should adopt the ministry of preaching. At his prayer he seemed to see a fiery globe descend from Heaven and touch his throat, which was instantly cured. And it was no dubious grace vouchsafed to him on this occasion, for afterwards we read of him that his voice was singularly sweet and clear.

Bernardine's celebrity as a preacher dates from 1418, ten years after Saint Vincent's prediction and one before the death of that great servant of God. He is described as of short but upright stature. His countenance was beautiful and his appearance inspired veneration. He combined an expression of joy with one of recollection. The voice which had been given to him by a miraculous answer to prayer was full-bodied, now low, now soft and sweet, now severe and sad, and so flexible, that he had perfect control over it to direct it as and whither he would. But before following Bernardine to the scene of his apostolic labours we have to ascertain the nature of the arena. If passions were powerful, what were the arms which the Saint could oppose to them? Sensuality, love of money and of pleasure had perverted men's hearts from the true way. Bernardine went forth to the combat of souls from the desert of chastity and poverty, in the strength of the bare and naked Cross. As if his superiors had foreseen his future destiny, they had allotted to him the humiliating office of begging alms for the brethren from door to door. Religious superiors have a particular comprehension of the Gospel axiom, *Qui se humiliat exaltabitur*. When before Bernardine's ordination they removed him to Siena, the disagreeable nature of his employment made itself felt in proportion to the number of his old friends and acquaintances in his paternal city. Some of his relations openly disapproved of his vocation, thinking it, after the fashion of worldly minds, a dishonour to themselves, and at

their secret suggestion, the little boys in the street would freely jeer at Friar Bernardine as he passed with his companion, sometimes throwing clay at his habit or stones at his bare feet. The other friar, seeing his unalterable patience, would marvel that he could allow his habit to be treated with so little respect. And Bernardine, with his sweet gentleness, would reply, "Brother, this want of respect in those boys is not malicious but rather an effect of their youth. Leave them alone to amuse themselves that they may humble us, for much indeed would be our profit from their play if we could only gain greater patience from it. It will put us in possession of our souls and obtain for us a crown of glory."

Once when Bernardine was soliciting alms in his cousin Tobia's house, he was met by a relative, who burst forth into a storm of reproaches. In his words it is easy to recognize the worldly spirit which we all know so well when a vocation ceases to be a far-off theory and becomes a personal matter in a family. He marvelled how Bernardine could have the effrontery to appear before him after spoiling the hopes of his house, and choosing an idle life under the pretext of sanctity, "for what is a friar but a pig, one who, idle himself, eats the labours of others and always looks for fat pastures." The begging of alms "like a hypocrite," in other words, the humiliation of the thing, specially incensed the relative. The Saint listened to his reproaches in silence, but on this occasion he did not allow the affront offered to his habit to remain unanswered. He replied calmly that a man who embraces the Cross is no lover of idleness. "And do not fear," he ended by saying, "that I shall dishonour your house, for I shall exalt it so that in all the annals of Siena no other house of rich man or potentate shall be worthier of Siena's remembrance."

Like the obedient man, the humble shall also "speak victory," and Bernardine spoke it on this occasion with a prophetic spirit.

The Apostle of Italy

From 1250 until the invasion of Charles VIII in 1494, the history of Italy presents an accumulation of minute facts. It was the reign of pettiness on a magnificent scale, personified now by one family or faction, now by another. Not only has it been the fate of Italy to fall a continual prey to the strongest foreign enemy - *per servir sempre, O vincitrice, O vinta* - but from the date just mentioned, Italians themselves were too prone to make the aggrandisement of their own particular territory replace a higher patriotism. The individual greatness of Italian cities and republics was superseded by the government of the tyrants, and if the licence of the first state of things had been met by democratical servitude, the resistance opposed to the tyrants was dark and underhand conspiracy. In the beginning they were chosen by the people, but with the custom of power this feature completely disappeared in their election; they preferred to buy their title of imperial vicars from the representative of the Holy Roman Empire. Thus in the fluctuating fortunes of Italy, the notion of hereditary right has been grievously wanting. Power, with certain restrictions, belonged to the strongest, to him who could best assert his claims, whilst all along the mediation of the Emperor was invoked against the preponderance of one state. The *certain restrictions* were palpable in the short-lived enjoyment of despotism which fell to the lot of many of the small princes whose elevation and deposition were alike due to a sudden revolution. In some cities, Milan, Lodi, Pavia, Brescia, and others, for instance, rival families disputed the supremacy, whilst over the whole of Italy were spread the factions of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, who fought each other, not so much in virtue of former principles as in the strength of a name which was powerful enough to keep up

the fire of an ancient hatred. Ferrara, the first among Italian cities, adopted a prince in 1208, and the system of petty principalities which its example inaugurated brought about an equilibrium of power not conducive to national, but highly favourable to civil union. Upon this basis was built up the social progress of Italy for some two hundred years amid a restlessness which lived on the edge of the sword, and revelled in ignoble victories, as if without those ceaseless but quickly dispelled insurrections, life would not have been worth the living. Honest war would have been better than that perpetual dribble of skirmishes kept up by the Condottieri. They were generals who sold themselves with their companies of soldiers to the highest bidder, now fighting for, now against, the same cause, and seizing every pretext of small success to obtain higher pay. There can exist no more disturbing element to the general peace than men who live rather by the accessories of war than war itself, that is, by plundering and devastation, and the Condottieri supported through interested motives the smallest states and factions, because their own gain would rise in proportion to the number of divisions. But in Bernardine's time, besides the vigorous and grasping Republic of Saint Mark, four powers in Italy were tending to a confederate unity: Lombardy, under the auspices of the Visconti, at Milan; Tuscany with Florence, its capital, and the rising Medici; the Kingdom of Naples; and the Papal States. The turbulence of the factions had driven the Pope to Avignon, and if when present he experienced so great a difficulty in holding his own, it may be gathered what his authority suffered in his absence. Albornoz, with wonderful skill, had recovered the Papal territory for his master, although he caught the Romans in the act of listening to a Roman tribune, whose republican programme it was to "judge the earth with justice and its people with equity." Property which requires the presence and direction of an agent is a very doubtful good, and this is what the Pontifical vicars, as they

were called, proved to be. Naturally the true master of the land was entirely in their power, and too often they abused their position to become practically the lord where they should have been only the lieutenant. Thus many of the towns which directly acknowledged the Holy See had become in point of fact small republics, about whose municipal privileges the inhabitants were exceedingly jealous. It was this strong individuality in the Italian character which retarded Italy's political unity, yet without the party spirit and the factions it would have been a very prosperous time as to comfort, wealth, and independence. For the Italians we might change one word of Saint Augustine's definition of strength. For them it would have been order in liberty. The sins of those days against which all Saint Bernardine's efforts as an apostle were directed, are those of an overgrown civilization, produced though it was in this case by individual efforts. Italy, says one of the foremost of her historians, was about to pass from the ages of faith to a political era. We can understand that the exaggeration of an unpractising faith will often result in gross superstition, and that this superstition will sometimes mar the face of truth with its own unwise conceits. Perhaps this is exemplified in the way the plague, which hangs like a dark curtain over the closing scene of the middle ages, was viewed by various minds. Some saw in it a punishment for the violation of Sunday and feast-days, a curse upon blasphemy, usury, and adultery; and the exaggeration of faith broke forth in a somewhat cut and dried routine of processions, exorcisms, and pretended miracles, whilst on the other hand- panic produced a craving to eat, drink, and be merry, which was wild in its intensity. The Dances of the Dead set forth in popular paintings the weird spectacle of death and enjoyment. The whole scene of popes, kings, merchants, writers, old men and young, women and children, who join hands in the dance, though some of them are only skeletons, seem to say, "Let us cover ourselves with

roses." Poor plague-stricken people! Whether they would or not, death was at hand, and whilst they acknowledged the warning of the plague, their hearts were far from the faith of their lips. It is in vain to oppose sin with the letter of religion.

Now Bernardine's apostolate vigorously attacked the habit of usury, gambling, and the refinement of luxury in women's dress, three things which come under the same head and are noticeable in an effete society, also the bitter enmity produced by the factions, and immorality. There was something solid about the trophies which he carried away from the battlefield. They were those funeral piles of feminine adornments which he laid upon the altar of sacrifice, those unmistakeable symptoms of a returning brotherly love, or those galling public penances which were generously undertaken at his voice in virtue of that Holy Name he loved so tenderly.

In 1378 Siena, which was renowned for its democratical traditions and governed at that time by its Council of Nine, had renounced its natural and Guelph ally, Florence, to sign a league with Giovanni Galeazzo Visconti, the then rising star of Italian skies, and it was at Milan, the capital of the Visconti, in 1418 or 1420, for there is some uncertainty as to date, that Bernardine began to be famous, although he had then been preaching for the space of fourteen years in various parts. He emulated Saint Vincent in his mode of life, going from place to place with a chaste yet fiery eloquence, which fell like burning coals upon the chilled hearts of the Italian people. Before it was light his congregation gathered together in the place appointed for the sermon, and even quite little children were taken by their parents, as if the mere sight of the Saint would bring down a blessing upon their future life. Every day, after devoutly celebrating the Holy Sacrifice, he preached to the crowds who gathered from the neighbouring towns and villages to hear him. "The

world," says Bernardine's biographer, that is, his Italian world probably, 'seethed with magical arts and sacrileges. Incantations were used to cure illness, and the men of that age, reading future events by divination, and dealing in the prognostics of magic, deceived their fellow-men. Mass on festival-days was rarely heard, the Sacrament of Penance, with the Sacred Body of Christ, received only once a year, or oftener men contented themselves with a death-bed confession and Communion. There was no fear of laws which prohibited games of chance; the dice- players boldly assembled in public gymnasiums, where they could give themselves up to their play with impunity. No distinction was apparent between festival and other days, excepting, perhaps, in the greater concourse of people to witness the various performances." The Saint appeared in the midst of this complete forgetfulness of God, and urged upon each one the duty of individual efforts of penance, that so the Divine anger might be appeased. Many persons returned indeed to the practices of the faith, or adopted them, who had either given up going to the sacraments or never made an effort in that direction. *Et emitte coelitus lucis tuce radium*, the Church sings in her beautiful sequence to the Holy Spirit. Certain saints seem to set forth in their working the answer to this petition. A devout woman at Arezzo often saw a globe of various colours issuing as if with the breath from Bernardine's mouth when he was preaching, and once a good but lukewarm youth came to consult him as to whether he should enter religion. "You must pray to God about this, my son," answered the Saint, "that He may inspire you for the greater good of your soul." Whilst saying this he laid his hand upon the youth's arm, and although the weather was exceedingly cold, the touch seemed like fire. What does this signify, adds the biographer, but that cold hearts were fired by his speech and by his touch.

His character appears in all its ripe beauty as we find him at Milan preaching with evangelical courage before a tyrant, then its Duke, Filippo Maria Visconti. It seems that the Saint had been moved by inspiration to visit Lombardy, and when he arrived at Milan, he found its people too obsequious in their flattery of the Duke, speaking to him on bended knee as if he had been a god. Bernardine attacked this vanity in one of his sermons, and although he did it in a general way, the Duke took offence, and declared that no more such sermons should be preached, or the preacher should suffer. Bernardine answered that it was his duty to combat vices, not to offend individuals, that far from laying down his arms so easily, he should esteem himself happy to bear witness to the truth. The Duke said no more then, but his spirit was angered, and when one of his servants came to him as a tempter, proposing to lay a bait for the friar's virtue, he readily yielded to the counsel. The servant, like most of his kind, evidently knew human nature. "Perhaps this friar," he tentatively said to the Duke, "who is so austere, and preaches so strongly in disfavour of riches, would appreciate them better if he saw and felt them than he does now that they are at a distance. Try him with money: his acceptance or rejection of it will give us his measure." The Duke made use of this cunning servant to send Friar Bernardine five hundred florins, with the request that he would spend them on himself. Living at the cost of Divine Providence, the Saint said that he wanted nothing, but Milan possessed many poor, who would be only too glad of the alms. This answer did not suit the malicious servant, and he returned once more to Bernardine, begging him to accept the Duke's bounty. "I must not return to my Lord with the florins, Father," he alleged, "and you will vex him if you do not take his gift." The Saint was fully conscious of the tempter. Turning to him, he replied, "If that is the case, I wish to employ his money as best I can. Follow me." They went out to the prison, where Bernardine speedily ascertained those

who were detained for debt, and charged the servant to see how far the money would go. Two prisoners alone, whom it did not suffice to rescue, wept bitterly at the Saint's feet. He said tenderly, "My children, I have no more to give you, but I will stake my influence to procure your liberty, and if I cannot obtain sufficient money, I offer myself as a prisoner that you may be freed." "Now tell the Duke," he added to the servant, "that in his name, and merely to please him, I took his money; and tell him how I spent it, and that I appeal to his generosity to deliver me from the obligation of my promise to rescue those two poor prisoners. My personal liberty depends upon their debts, because I am so honourable a man that if they are not freed, I shall keep my word." The servant returned in confusion to his master, whereas the Duke exclaimed, "I wish to be the friend of so chivalrous a man," and willingly paid the debt. This sweetness exhibited towards a temporal suffering was a figure of the far greater anxiety felt by the Saint to rescue sinners under the thralldom of vice. Solitude for a soul's spiritual imprisonment will often prove to be the first chord which strikes home to the hardened heart after the erring of many years, and produces at last from it that cry of the Psalmist, "The net is broken and we are free." Bernardine found Milan steeped in vice, but an old chronicle says that he planted the standard of virtue with so vigorous a hand that even in the captain's absence the soldiers he had trained remained true to their colours.

His apostolate spread itself over a period of thirty-eight years, of which the first ten or fourteen were passed in obscurity. Bernardine was the Apostle of Italy, and all his labours without exception belonged to Italy. In the year 1420 he was at Piacenza, Bergamo, and Brescia; in 1422 at Verona and Venice on a mission of peace; in 1423 at Vicenza, 1427 in Rome, 1429 at Liguria, Genoa, Savona, Milan; in 1432, at Siena and Rome; in 1433 at Siena,

occupied in arranging his works; in 1438 he was elected Vicar of the Convents of the Primitive Observance, and was at Naples and Aquila; in 1440 at Florence, 1443 at Ferrara, where he predicted the misfortunes which were to fall upon Italy in 1510 and 1511. In 1444 he was in the Kingdom of Naples, at Massa, the city of his birth, and at Siena for the last time. He was wending his way from Spoleto to Aquila when a mortal sickness overtook him at his post and in his armour. He inaugurated a new method of preaching, for the decay which had affected other practices of religion was visible too in the pulpit. It is said that, in denouncing vice he excelled all contemporary preachers, in speaking of our Lady he surpassed himself.

There is something most touchingly poetical about Bernardine's first encounter after leaving Milan. He was travelling on foot with one companion when dark night overtook them in the solitude of a mountain pass, and they lost their way. The Saint's companion was appalled by the loneliness of the place and its solitude, but Bernardine stayed his fears by the thought of that Divine Providence Whose arms were round them. The barking of a dog, which they soon heard, apprised them of rescue, and they walked on till they came to a small dwelling belonging to a labourer, who received them, notwithstanding the inopportune hour, with much hospitality. But when he discovered that one of his guests was Friar Bernardine, he called all the members of his family, that each one might benefit by the visit of a holy man, and left nothing undone which could refresh the weary travellers. The Saint was never outdone in generosity. He thanked the labourer by an earnest prayer to God to bless him with plenty and prosperity, and the request was granted, for later on the popular voice attributed these temporal blessings to the Saint's visit in the phrase, "the family blessed by Saint Bernardine."

On his way to Mantua, where he was to preach in the following year, 1419, he had to traverse a river at high tide, and possessed not wherewith to pay the ferryman. The man, seeing the poverty apparent in the Saint's habit and that of his companion, insisted upon his money there and then, saying that the prayer, which Bernardine promised him in return for a free passage, would not enable him to live. Then the Saint besought him with humility to count upon a collection which he was going to make at Mantua. "Father," answered the man, "the people there can go without their sermon much better than I without my money," and he still refused. Then Bernardine turned to his companion, saying, "Brother, have you confidence in God, and have you sufficient courage and faith to do as you shall see me do?"

"Yes, Father."

"Then in virtue of the most sweet Name of Jesus, Whom the elements obey, follow me." Stretching his cloak over the waters, they walked across the river as if they had been on dry land, followed shortly by the contrite ferryman in his boat. He begged the Saint's forgiveness, and when Bernardine asked him to keep the miracle a secret, he replied frankly, "No, Father, it would be ingratitude to God if I did not, atone for my sin by some public confession and penance, that men may know I am so bad that I obliged God, as it were, to work this great miracle."

The fame of what he had done helped on Bernardine's mission at Mantua, as it may be supposed. In the course of the same journey the Apostle came upon a dead man who lay bathed in his blood, the victim, perhaps, of the party spirit which was often helped to execute its wicked deeds by those mountain passes. Bernardine called him back to life by the invocation of the Name of Jesus, that power which he evoked so opportunely over the feuds of the times.

There is something very significant in the special devotion of a great saint. In this case it answered the spiritual needs of those days in Italy, for if men were so prone to strife and cruelty because of the name of Guelph or Ghibelline, which no longer signified anything beyond the particular interest of the individual, the name of Jesus is the emblem of peace, charity, and holiness. For Bernardine it was later to be the sign set up by God to work him contradiction. "O thou Name of Jesus," he breaks forth in one of his sermons, "exalted above every name! O triumphant Name! O joy of angels and of the just! O fear of Hell! in Thee is all hope of pardon, of grace, and of glory. O most sweet Name! Thou givest pardon to sinners, Thou dost renovate us, Thou dost fill our hearts with divine sweetness, and dost expel our fears. O Name full of grace! through Thee the perception of great mysteries is attained, and souls are inflamed with divine love, are strengthened in their combats, and delivered from all evils." In many of the places visited by the Saint, party spirit had set up its badges at the tops of houses, gates, and public places, and sometimes introduced them into churches, for factions formed a kind of freemasonry, whereof the members were gradually substituting the promptings of wild passion, with its outward signs, for the Credo, and for the rites and ceremonies of the true faith. Bernardine, then, caused the Holy Name to be engraved on a wooden tablet in letters of gold, and he was in the habit of holding this symbol up to the people after his sermon. Three towns in particular seem to have been most cruelly divided by the spirit of hatred - Verona, Perugia, and Bergamo. At Verona, where the Saint preached in 1422, he found the Guelphs and Ghibellines in open war, and the streets streaming with the blood of the combatants. Bernardine's mission was crowned by a general making of peace, and a procession of thanksgiving, which procession the grateful inhabitants renewed for many years afterwards. On one occasion at Perugia the people, armed with iron helmets, and conspicuous with badges of owl or

oxen, according to their party, fought each other with a misplaced zeal, many losing their lives in the unworthy struggle, and becoming the "devil's martyrs." Bernardine quickly stopped these warlike proceedings, and at his words the signs of owls and of oxen, together with the extraordinary articles of feminine apparel, which never escaped his vigilance, were brought to the pile and consumed. "The Lord God," he said at another time to the same people, "considering that fatal spirit which He hates above everything, has sent me to you as His angel to announce peace on earth unto those men amongst you who are of good will. You who desire peace, proposing to keep it henceforth with your neighbour, come to my right hand, and you who desire it not, stand on my left." All save one young nobleman with his followers moved to the Saint's right, but he, murmuring against Bernardine, kept to the left side. Knowing the weight of evil example, the apostle admonished him publicly to forgiveness of the injuries he had received, "for if thou dost not promise to keep the peace thou shalt not enter thy house alive." But the nobleman reviled the prophetic words, and as he was crossing the threshold of his door fell suddenly dead.

Sometimes Bernardine chose a humorous mode of dealing with the spirit of contention. Thus he once excited the people's curiosity for many days by the announcement that he would show them the devil. When therefore a multitude had gathered itself together in expectant awe, he said, "Now I will keep my word, and whereas I promised to show you one devil I will show you many. Look you one at another, and thus you will see devils, for you yourselves are devils, doing his work....

Is there not a great merit in this plain speaking, and how, we ask, without the salutary doctrine of eternal punishment, is the fear of God ever to be produced in the hearts of wicked

and depraved men? The great majority are moved by threats rather than by love, so that we may fear many reach only attrition and stop short of contrition, to their own great loss. The state of mind which does not tolerate the doctrine of eternal punishment is near akin to that which denies the basis of all religion, the doctrine of God the Creator.

Perhaps it was at one of these towns that Bernardine preached his three famous sermons against the spirit of faction. It finds less echo in our own times than another abuse against which he was loud in his denunciation, but the race of men who seek nothing but their own interests under the shadow of a great name is by no means extinct. Bernardine denounces them with remarkable sagacity, seeing that their party spirit was an infusion of the old idolatry into Christian society. In reading what he preached in the full light of his own Catholic faith to Italians of the fifteenth century, we may draw our conclusions as to how he would stigmatize the modern deification of human reason, with its accompaniments of a world-soul in the place of God, with its abolition of hell-fire and the legions of devils, treating the one as an invention of man and the other as a hideous fable. A man in the emancipation of the nineteenth century surely bears about him something like those badges of owls and oxen; created as a reasonable being, he walks upon the earth purblind as an owl, or dull as an ox.

It was Bernardine's custom to preach at great length, and to divide his sermons into articles, which he again subdivided into points. As we read we are convinced of the patriotic heart which must have dictated those ardent words about the troubles of Italy. One of these sermons is for the third Sunday in Lent, and is on the text, "Every kingdom divided against itself shall fall." It bears the heading, "against the Guelphs and Ghibellines and other productions of party spirit," "Where is the man of heart so hard and so stony, that

he could refrain from tears if he were to have knowledge of the things which we have heard, and seen, and known by certain experience, in the regions of Italy, and above all in Lombardy?" Then he proves his words, showing how factions lead to the destruction of the country. "When parties begin to boil over, their sins require punishment: the devil brings it about, and Divine justice permits that one banishes the other. The goods of the exiles are pillaged, their homes destroyed, their lands go uncultivated, their vineyards are cut down and destroyed, the arts and commerce are given up by them, their herds and flocks and other live stock are devoured. The lads sent into banishment with their fathers are obliged by want to let themselves out for hire. They become thieves; some are hung, some are killed, some perish in battle, others end a miserable life by some other kind of unhappy death. The young men do not marry, and live in the same way as those just mentioned. The marriageable girls remain without husbands; some take to a wandering life and to the worst of trades. The men are worn out by hunger, poverty, sadness, and manifold misery, and they wander wretchedly from place to place. Religious lose their regular observance, clerics lay aside the modesty of their state, learning and study are abandoned. Cities become dens of thieves, churches are profaned, monasteries depeopled and ruined, wives are made widows, and all goods temporal and spiritual are destroyed. But this is not the end of evils. There remain "other five." When the sins of the banished party have been punished, and the wickednesses of the party which expelled it have reached their full height, then there is another crash of Divine justice, and the wheel of the state of worldly affairs turns round. The banished come back, and drive out those who were in power; they revenge themselves with savage cruelty, and pay off the score of all the injuries which they have received. If anything remains to be destroyed, the end of its destruction is at hand J What wonder indeed that the

Pope should have appreciated the peace of Avignon. I have seen," adds the Saint, in finishing this point, "two cocks fighting a long and severe battle together, tearing one another to pieces with beaks and spurs, and when they were both utterly exhausted, and could fight no more, their rage against one another had not diminished but increased. And so I have seen many of these faction men, so utterly wretched as to have wasted their whole substance upon their feuds, and to have nothing at all left except the rabid fury of their party spirit." These men, according to Bernardine's recommendation, were to be avoided like the pestilence. Of both corporal and spiritual plague he could say, *experto credite*. He finishes the point by these strong words, "Perhaps some are surprised that I speak so severely against these parties, but the answer is supplied by sad experience. The plague comes into a city and many die, but many remain alive, and generally they are the larger part. But let the faction of Guelphs or Ghibellines, or any other, enter a city, and it is the greatest wonder if any escape, without at least in course of time joining, or being thought to join, one side or the other, as I indeed, to my astonishment and surprise, know from certain experience. And, what is most of all to be grieved over, even those who seem to fear God become so mad and senseless, especially where the Guelphs and Ghibellines are concerned, that they live as serenely in their faction as if the perfection of sanctity consisted in it. They are like Lot's sons-in-law in Sodom, who were so utterly without sense of the wickedness of the place, that when he endeavoured to persuade them to depart he seemed to them to be jesting." Bernardine here gives one of the reasons for that moral decline in Italy which came more particularly under his notice as an apostle. In the sermon which follows for the same day he goes into more particulars, it being directed against the signs or badges of the parties, and he quotes the text of the thirty-seventh Psalm, "They have set up their ensigns for badges." He

denounces these badges as marks of idolatry, and the using them as a sin which kills the soul, and he gives a noticeable reason why Italy amongst all other nations should suffer from this party spirit. "When the Apostles and Disciples preached the Most Holy Name of Jesus Christ, demons fled from the idols, images were reduced to dust, and all pestilent idolatry was destroyed in virtue of the martyrdom of the Saints. The same envy which brought death into the world, the faith of Christians being cold, has set up idolatry again in Italy, though in a more hidden way. For, as if in derision of Christ and of His Church, in that spot where the Roman Empire, the principal seat of idolatry, had reigned, and later, at the prayer of Christ, the indefectible Chair of Peter, in that very place idolatry has been renewed by the agency of the devil, for this is done by using party badges. The Apostle foresaw this when he wrote to the Romans who are in Italy, Rome being the capital of Italy and the Chair of Peter. In the first chapter to the Romans he thus speaks of the idolatry which we now see, "Because that when they knew God, they have not glorified Him as God, or given thanks, but became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened. For professing themselves to be wise they became fools. And they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of a corruptible man, and of birds and of four-footed beasts and of creeping things." 20 Now our own experience tells us that this is literally true. Some of these parties have as the standard of their faction a man who is their head, whom they follow and honour more than God, for whom they willingly die, which they will not do for Christ; and this man is the image, not of God, but of a corruptible man, a very devil incarnate. Some have birds for badges, such as eagles of various colours, or other live birds, which they feed like idols. Others have four-footed animals. Some have a lion of ordinary colour, some a white one, a red one, and so on. Some honour serpents. I would not condemn arms or badges

of nobles or republics, in so far as they are not party signs, because men may wear them without sinning if they bear them without passion. But for the greater part their use is abused, and they become party badges. For instance, the eagle, as denoting the imperial dignity, is by no means Ghibelline, but is adopted in Italy by the Ghibellines. Some insane men, moreover, assert that the Church is Guelph, but, as experience teaches us, the Guelphs will fight for their own interest seven times a day against the Church, and the Ghibellines for their own interest seven times a day against the Empire. For, as the Apostle says, "all such men seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ." In their absurdity, the Saint goes on to remark, they make a certain saint a Guelph and another a Ghibelline, and worse than this they make the very God of eternal peace belong to one of their parties. "But alas! alas! and again alas!" bursts from Bernardine's lips as he speaks of the devotedness of these men to their faction, who will not bear a blow on their cheek for the love of our Lord; who will punish with relentless vengeance and with death the smallest insult offered to their badge, and will not raise their finger to punish contempt towards God, our Lady, and the Saints. In Lombardy they have surpassed the old persecutors of the martyrs, by devouring the cooked flesh of their victims. Well might Bernardine sigh, "Alas! alas! and again alas!" over the evils opposed to the virtue essentially Christian by the factions, over that imitation of idolatry, that adoration of the devil, and that truly demoniacal vengeance. At another time he divides his sermon against the same evil into three parts, suggested by the text, "Woe, woe, woe unto the inhabitants of the earth." The first woe is directed against those who belong to a faction in their hearts, the second against those whose actions favour this wretched and soul-destroying spirit. He overthrows the objections of those who allege that their ancestors belonged to this or that party, or that certain states and cities impose an oath of obedience to one

particular faction, and he gives a most horrible picture of a country exposed to these divisions. "If any man be in doubt regarding this, let him attentively consider the consequences of party strife. They are prohibitions, betrayals, murder, fire, tyranny, the seeds of discord, the oppression of innocence, impious calumnies, hatred, revenge, false accusations, injustice, employment given to unworthy subjects, the division of friends, relations, comrades, parents, and children." This is, as it were, the bare outline of the evils which the Saint further developes, but his words already quoted are sufficient to prove how much Italy needed an apostle.

The second great evil which called for this energetic voice was gambling, or the passion for games of chance, and very probably this was one of the causes of the very prevalent usury of the day. It can easily be understood that the one engenders the other, as an unlawful mode of spending money will suggest all kinds of ways of making it. Bernardine compares gambling to a kind of rival Catholic Church of the powers of darkness. He supposes the devil to be calling together his satellites at the sound of the trumpet, and he puts these words into his mouth: "I have learnt by your account that Christ our Adversary has established one Holy Church on earth for the salvation of souls. Now I have been thinking of establishing a rival Church for the wicked in order to lose souls, and whatever He instituted in His Church unto good, I will disorganize it in mine unto evil. The gambling-houses, to be set up as near as possible to the true temples of God, are to be the rival attraction to the services of the Church, and they are to promote sensuality by providing savoury food, greediness being so often the first incentive to a life of vice." The devil's wish, for in the first point the Saint speaks quaintly enough in his words, is to succeed in getting a greater attendance in his "profane churches" than our Lord gains in His. The gambling tables

represent ecclesiastical fittings and ornaments, and the dice stand for the missal. Obscene pictures form this breviary of impiety, and open the minds of the gamblers to knowledge of the most horrible vice. "The more wicked they are, the dearer they will be to me." The third comparison of the ceremonies of the Mass to those of the gambling-tables, though somewhat fanciful, gives us an insight to the sort of impiety which was carried on under the cloak of a passion apparently distinct from it. Fifteen grievous sins, according to Saint Bernardine, arise from indulgence in gambling, and one of the not least deadly of its results is idleness, and idleness was one of the crimes which ruined Sodom.

"Gamblers become sensual, degenerate, and reprobate, and their life sets the first counsel of the law at defiance, to live honestly. I heard from one who was worthy of credence, that having once lost all he had at gambling, he played for and lost his teeth, and suffered them to be pulled out with equanimity. Another man pledged and lost his wife twice, and would have made her over to the winner had not some good woman befriended her for the love of God."

In connection with this propensity to gambling a very pleasing anecdote is told of Bernardine's sojourn at Bologna, where the passion for card-playing was most rife. The Saint had probably preached with his usual unction, for he had persuaded the ringleaders to bring their cards to the altar of sacrifice. But one young man, who supported his wife and a large family by painting cards, found himself thus deprived of the means of sustenance, and came to expose his distress to Bernardine. "Be not anxious," answered the Saint, "for I will give you a more fitting subject for your pencil, and one which will be more lucrative too." Taking a pen, he drew with it the favourite subject of his thoughts, a sun bearing in its centre the Holy Name of Jesus, promising the man that he should not lose by this new trade. The event proved the truth of his words, for so great was the devotion enkindled

by his preaching, that every one wished to possess a tablet with the life-giving name, and the former card-painter became a very prosperous man. It must be owned that Saint Paul's assertion, "Godliness is profitable to all things," seldom receives so clear an illustration.

And now to come to luxury in dress, which failing has more to say to our own times than the Guelphs and Ghibellines, or even the gambling tables. Bernardine dealt powerfully with the exaggerated taste of the day for finery, using unmistakably strong language to speak his own thoughts on the subject. He saw indeed in the habit of mind which displayed so great a solicitude about its body's garments an utter disregard of souls, or a deliberate wish to entrap them, and this it was that aroused all the fire of his apostolic spirit. What he says is in many respects so pertinent, that the inclination to quote largely from his sermons is only too tempting. "The evils resulting from vanity," he says, "affect four classes of persons - parents, married people, artisans, the accomplices of vanity," and he attacks most vigorously that particular kind of worldliness in parents which seeks after brilliant marriages for their daughters, regardless of cost or means, provided the end is attained. We leave our readers to judge whether this quality is obsolete. "How many crimes do you not commit, O unhappy mother, that your daughter may please all who look upon her? How anxiously do you strive to add other advantages to those which nature has bestowed upon her! If she is too lean, you try to make her appear fatter; and if she is too fat, you squeeze her; if she is born crooked, you contract her to make her straight. You teach her to dress her head, to paint her face, to walk elegantly, to find out new fashions, and to sing love-songs. What more can I say? You yourself are an experienced mistress of worldly arts to your daughter, and you care not at all for the good of her soul. Oh, what madness! But you, fathers of daughters, now I speak to you. You enrich

yourselves only too well by means of theft, usury, and in other abominable ways, that you may marry your daughters magnificently, and gain them a high position. But what is worse in parents is this: when they marry their daughter, they do not consider whether they are giving her to an honest man, but they think only of one thing, whether they are giving her to a rich man that she may shine. O unwise parents, hastening to eternal damnation for your daughters' sake, and taking them with you! O worldly-wise parents, destroyers of your own souls and of your children's!" Further on in the same sermon he speaks of worse evils arising from this fatal desire to shine in the world. First of all, those who might marry are afraid of taking wives with tastes so expensive, and they remain unmarried to lead immoral and vicious lives. Then very often parents exhaust all their resources upon one or two daughters who are pretty, and the others remain at home, though not indeed to preserve their innocence; or worse still, if they happen to have any deformity, they are sent into a convent, "like the scum or the refuse of the world." In this way the beauty of a religious vocation is disfigured, and little by little the holiest of things is turned into derision. The dregs of the chalice are thrown to God. In sorrow of heart the Apostle of Italy alludes to this system, destructive to national and social prosperity, "I would rather keep silence than speak of these things," but still, with a trembling hand, he lifts up the veil which outward decorum, at least, holds over life-destroying vice.

In another sermon Bernardine goes into somewhat amusing details in the various departments of feminine vanity. First, as to paint and false hair, the wearing of which he denounces as mortal sin. Secondly, he has a particular aversion to dresses with long tails, for in his day, as it appears from his sermons, much waste was occasioned in this way, owing to the very costly materials of the said tails. Thirdly, the erections worn by women on their heads, and

these he likens to a crown, not of twelve stars, but of twelve foolishnesses. His description of the tail is quaint, and also interesting, as a costume portrait of the period: "Our experience tells us that these tails are nothing else but the multiplication of evil expenses, the similitude of an animal, muddy in winter, dusty in summer, a broom of fools, an infernal censor, a peacock in the mud, a cause of blasphemy, the rapacity of pride, a serpent of hell, a chariot of devils, and a blood-stained sword of Satan's." But the abuses of this item are no fewer than twelve, which Bernardine enumerates: * The first abuse is the multiplication of unnecessary expenses. Think, O unhappy woman with a tail, how much expense is incurred by your trains." The length and expensive quality of the material are alluded to, and besides sweeping up the dust and mud, the tail, according to Bernardine, is often purchased with the blood of the poor, and hence draws down a curse upon its wearers. Whereas a beast has but one tail, a woman sometimes chooses to have seven or more, and she had better follow out the similitude and go on all fours. Then what impatience the same tail causes her maid, who has to brush it when it is taken off after having paraded the dusty streets. What a source of temptation it is to the poor to behold mud, as it were, clothed in fine garments, whilst they are tormented by cold, hunger, and thirst. "You will rarely find one of these luxurious women," says Bernardine, "with a heart open to the needs of the poor." But a worse abuse, as it seems to us, is that painful striving of every class to exalt itself out of its own sphere by adopting an unsuitable style of dress. The Saint uses the comparison of the different members of the heavenly hierarchy to exemplify the absurdity of these pretensions. "Why in the lowest of women is there a perfect passion to emulate the trains of empresses, queens, and duchesses? What is this but inordinate pride? What if the nose should usurp the place of the ear or the eye in the human face, would it not be monstrous?" When he

reaches the third point, the false hair and the head-dresses, he breaks forth into a comparison between the Christian woman who thus decks herself out, and the Divine Head of our Lord, crowned with thorns. "It would seem strange indeed if a woman who had just lost her husband or father went to Mass with her head adorned with flowers. But it is much more strange if a woman redeemed by Christ's Blood, the daughter and spouse of the Eternal Father, go to Mass not only with flowers in her hair, but with gold, precious stones, paint, and false hair. For every Mass is celebrated unto a remembrance of the suffering Christ, and when the priest elevates the Body and Blood of Christ, the elevation of His Body on the Cross is commemorated. O vanity of woman, which decks out the head with so great a variety of ornaments! Be mindful of that Divine Head, revered by the angels, which is pierced to its marrow by thorns, and covered with Blood for the expiation of your vanity; but yours is graced by every possible adornment. That Head is crowned with thorns, yours with precious stones. His Hair is bloody; yours - or I should say, another's - is whitened by artifice. His Face is disfigured by pallor, spittle, and blood; yours with paint of various hues. Those beautiful Eyes, which the angels contemplate, are obscured by a most bitter death; yours are on fire with luxury and concupiscence."

Elsewhere he ridicules women who will wear the hair of a dead person, because the devil prevents them from thinking about it, whereas they would be terrified to carry on their heads one single bone of a dead man.

We would call attention to one more point on this chapter of women's dress. It is the whole system of deceit, that is, of resorting to artificial means to supply natural deficiencies, which the Saint denounces in the same satirical but straightforward terms. Women come under this category who "paint their faces, and wish to make themselves either

taller or better-looking than they really are, who pad themselves out to appear good figures, . . . such women always commit mortal sin." And there follows a recommendation to unmarried women to be candid with their future husbands, if they have any natural defects. "If you are lame, you can hide your lameness after you are married, but you are bound to make known your natural shortcomings before marriage, lest your husband be deceived in his merchandise. And do not imitate a certain little woman who, wishing to marry, ordered herself an enormous pair of high shoes, and an immense erection of back hair, and padded herself with silk, so that she might appear to be plump and well-formed, although in reality she was somewhat hump-backed. After her marriage, when the high-heeled shoes and back hair were taken off, she looked so small, that her husband thought she was kneeling, and said, "Get up off your knees," but when he found out what she was, he would have nothing more to do with her. Lastly, a vain woman deceives her confessor, for when he asks her, "Wherefore all this vanity in your person?" she answers, "To please my husband," and she lies, because he sees her at home, not only without her adornments, but sometimes untidy and uncombed, and whereas she goes forth to make herself pleasant to others, he cannot succeed in getting even a good word out of her."

The words of Saint Bernardine open a curious vista upon the weaknesses and vices of his day, but frivolous as the women must have been to whom he addressed this satirical yet humorous preaching, we venture to say that in one respect at least they were better Christians than we are in these days of compromises. In many cases we read that the articles of finery, to which the Saint makes so many unmerciful allusions, were brought to the fire and burnt. Attempts to serve God and Mammon were less frequent than now, and if vice was rife, penance was not shirked. We do

not know that Saint Bernardine had ever occasion to say, as Father Faber says, "If you dance till four in the morning, and go to Communion at ten, I do not believe in your abiding sorrow for sin. If you are in the theatre till midnight, I do not credit the compunction of your morning's meditation." In spite of an overwhelming luxury in dress, the spirit of the middle ages had not died out, it produced one grand result: men were rather ashamed of their sin than of its penance.

To Suffer Ignominy for the Name of Jesus

The Saint who possessed so much practical knowledge of the evils which he fought against, probably owed some of his inspirations to Capriola, a monastery of the Observance in the neighbourhood of Siena, whither he retired from time to time to merge the preacher in the friar. Obedience and silent communings with God were his rest, the oasis of his ministry, for there is an absence of hurry, a calmness about the occupations of the busiest saints which is not one of the least marks of holiness. They made unto themselves inner lives independent of outward circumstances, so that when God saw well to alter these, or even to take away what might seem to be the daily bread of their working faculties, they proved happiness to be distinct from all this, and realized the observation of a great thinker, who says that it is in us and in God. To solitude, represented in Bernardine's life by the quiet of Capriola, may perhaps be attributed his peaceful confidence in the midst of persecution.

"More deserving of admiration than of imitation," is a phrase often used in speaking of some heroic action in a saint, and its purport is fully exemplified when a man undertakes what a saint undertook before him, but without the special call from God to do it. We have seen how faithfully the bands who followed Saint Vincent Ferrer from place to place both answered his invitation to penance and inspired contrition in others. If this system of conversion had been an abnormal remedy, there was no want of natural wisdom about the whole plan, and the law of God was strictly carried out before pilgrims were allowed to think of a work of supererogation. The case entirely changes when an ordinary man, without special call, adopts an extraordinary course of

life. He falls into the natural snares which the Saint avoided, because he was doing an appointed work, and there is a want of common sense on the face of the whole matter which it is humiliating to realize. In the days of Saint Gregory the Great men then living fancied they should see the end; at the extreme confines of the middle ages the same idea was prevalent, or rather fear of the end was fear of the personal Antichrist, and if a saint such as Saint Vincent Ferrer had wrought a plentiful harvest for God as the Apostle of the Judgment, others without his sanctity traded deceitfully with the popular belief, and made up to themselves not treasures in Heaven but infatuated followers on earth. God allowed one of these to perfect His servant Bernardine in suffering ignominy for His name's sake. A certain Manfred de Vercelli, a Dominican as it seems, a friar of great learning, but of too much credulity, was actively preaching the speedy coming of Antichrist, and predicting with it his own martyrdom at Rome. He found many followers in both sexes, about one hundred men and three times the number of women, who, with their more tender susceptibilities and their love of romance, were an easy prey to his indiscreet zeal. Personal sympathy for a man has always been a powerful reason both for good and evil, but there exists a sure test as to its virtue, obedience to the highest authority in the Church. When these Manfredians had received the habit of the Third Order of Saint Dominic at his hands, they seemed to live in a state of emancipation from the rest of the Church so as to deserve the epithet of anti-christian sect which Saint Antoninus of Florence bestowed upon them, and when Martin V., the Pope elected at Constance, ordered them to disperse, they gave this clear proof that their spirit came not of God, they still followed Manfred to escape from the toils of Antichrist, that is, committed grievous sin to avoid imaginary danger. Things were brought to a head by the counsel given by Bernardine's companion friar to one of the women of the

sect, who asked if she might make a vow to follow Manfred without her husband's knowledge or consent. When the Saint heard of this dangerous tampering with a Divine law, he made it his business to signalize the double error which Manfred was propagating, the coming of Antichrist, and separation without mutual consent. It was to avenge these efforts that the sectarian pointed at Bernardine as an innovator and an encourager of idolatry. Did he not expose the Holy Name for adoration?

If there had not been something particularly significant in this devotion, there would have been neither trouble nor suffering in its inauguration. When the Church, like a beautiful tree or plant, begins to put forth branches and flowers which were not previously discernible to human eye, the cry is sometimes raised, "Who has done this, the enemy has sown seed whilst we slept?" But the head gardener is called, and upon examination he finds that the new green shoot or bud is only a natural development of what is already in the tree, and he says that the branch may live and flourish. This is the history of nearly every devotion in the Church which is to have a great career, and we have instances of it in two prominent cases. Juliana of Retinne was treated as demented when she asked for the festival of Corpus Christi, and Margaret Mary suffered bitter persecution for the Sacred Heart. Bernardine has borne witness for the Holy Name.

The machinations of Manfred and his party were allowed to prevail, and Bernardine who was then preaching the Lent at Viterbo, was summoned by Martin V to Rome in order to answer the accusation of heresy. Manfred alleged against him that he was a preacher of a dangerous extravagance with the motive of drawing people after himself, and that his little tablets were idolatrous. The difference between the Saint and the fanatic appears very forcibly as a result of

Martin's temporary decision. He forbade Manfred his followers, and Bernardine the instrument of his pretended idolatry. The one gave the example of complete obedience, whereas no authority had power over Manfred's will. As a more striking contrast to Bernardine's entire submission, he acted on the devil's device, *Non serviam*, and continued to wield the sceptre over his followers.

The Saint's reception by the Holy Father is a powerful comment on the text, Vanity of vanity and all things are vanity, except serving God and Him alone. Had Bernardine not been in the fullest acceptance of the word a chosen soul, he must have succumbed in the fire of calumny. It was the spring of 1427, consequently ten years since the decision of Constance had restored peace to the Holy City, After twenty years spent in evangelizing Italy, Bernardine was received at Rome with every mark of rigour, and Martin V gave him severely to understand that unless the charge could be fully disproved,, he would be made an example to others. Probably all Rome was astir with the impending trial, for the Sovereign Pontiff wished to have the points discussed in his own presence in the Basilica of Saint Peter. On the other side, Bernardine's spiritual relations, the Franciscans, and of these more particularly the Observants, justly looked upon his disgrace as a matter very closely affecting themselves, and in this, their zeal to defend the Saint stands out in a marked contrast to his perfect calmness. "Leave God to act," or "God has a care of these things," were his words when questioned as to the cause of his great equanimity. Without such persecutions, he would also say, his soul would have been in imminent danger of eternal death. They who have experienced the bitterness of calumny will acknowledge the heroic virtue of a man possessing his soul in patience under its influence. As if contempt and unkindness had been the most natural reward of his labours, Bernardine awaited the decision which was to

affect his whole subsequent career. Either he would be permitted to resume the ministry which was so much a part of his life, that he applied to himself the words of Saint Paul: "I came not to baptize, but to preach;" or he would be branded as a heretic, or at least as a rash innovator who is viewed always with suspicion by the Catholic instinct of conservatism. Whilst the sentence was pending, the Saint, whom a kind of spiritual affinity drew so near to Bernardine, comes before us in all the beauty of natural chivalry of character chastened and purified by grace. We speak of Saint John Capistran. He, too, was a friar of the Observance, and when news reached him at Naples of Bernardine's trouble, he set out speedily to employ the powers of his eloquence in his brother's defence. With a fearless ardour he carried the banner of the Holy Name through the streets of Rome, preaching it to the multitude in the eager confidence of triumph. The step favourably impressed Martin V, and when a few days later, Bernardine stood upon his trial, it was satisfactorily proved that, not zeal for the truth, but jealousy, had inspired the opposition. The Sovereign Pontiff was now as anxious to honour the Saint as he had previously been disposed to suspicion and severity, and as with the saints personal fame or dishonour is a very small consideration, and the glory of God the all-absorbing question of their lives, to extol the devotion which he had preached with unwearied zeal would be the the greatest happiness, nay, in one sense, the consummation of Bernardine's apostolate. The day following, Rome put its first seal upon explicit veneration of the Holy Name. Bernardine's own device, the word Jesus written on a sun, surrounded by a halo, was adopted as its outward expression, and the banner, already familiarized to the Romans by John Capistran's ardour, was now solemnly carried through the streets whilst Bernardine himself was invited to preach its glories in the Eternal City, where he remained for the space of eighty days. There, too, he became a successful apostle,

for one who preaches a special devotion has generally a particular mission to fulfill. Love of the Holy Name was the heavenly antidote against the universal forgetfulness of God in Italy, and the vice which was a consequence of that forgetfulness.

But persecution had not said its last word against the preacher of the Holy Name. In the second year of Eugenius IV's Pontificate, 1432, precisely the same attempt to defame Bernardine was renewed by the followers of Manfred. Once more the Saint was cited to appear in Rome, but this time his enemies had reckoned without the most important person there. When Eugenius became fully aware of their machinations, he disavowed them entirely so far as he was concerned as Head of the Church. And furthermore, he published a Bull not only to clear the Saint from their calumnies, but to extol him as one of God's faithful servants.

It is Bossuet's remark about our Lady and Saint Joseph that from the time our Lord adopted them, as it were, for His own, their life was a cross and a martyrdom. Until the birth of our Lord they had never been without a house, but as soon as He was born, they were forced to take refuge in a stable.

"When Jesus enters into a place, He brings with Him His Cross and all His thorns, and distributes them to those whom He loves." In the first joys of her Maternity our Lady was told that her Child "was a sign which should be contradicted," and the prophecy has received what we might call a special fulfillment in the lives of those saints who have particularly cherished the Sacred Humanity. On two separate occasions Bernardine was charged with imposture, hypocrisy, and heresy. But he possessed his soul in patience whilst under the ban of calumny, and if he finally triumphed, it was rather by what he left unsaid than by what he said. The secret of that heroic peace was his interior and silent communion with Jesus, the Lover of men and men's Beloved. What can be

said of no earthly affection is true of Divine love; it feeds at once the three powers of man, memory, will, and understanding, to their full measure, whilst the heart replenishes itself from those inexhaustible fountains. Saint Bernard, to whom Bernardine bore so close a resemblance, has expressed something of this in those beautiful lines:

Jesu dulcis memoria,
Dans vera cordi gaudia,
Sed super mel et omnia
Ejus dulcis praesentia.

Life in Death

How much a man must love God before he can hope to be persecuted for God! How much of mortification and penance go to make up an apostle! The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, so do souls, and the perfection of Bernardine's inner life, as the glimpses of it which have come down to us. testify, is the real key to his apostleship. When a man stirs up the hearts of multitudes and renovates, so to say, a whole generation, we may rightly infer that in private he leads the life of an angel.

In speaking of virginity our Lord uttered two sentences of apparently contrary drift. He said all men take not this word, but they to whom it is given, and again, he that can take, let him take it. In the first instance virginity is a gift, but a gift which previous goodness has the power to draw down, as the Spouse in the holy Canticle is attracted by aromatical spices. When our Lord said, *Qui potest capere e, capiat*, did He not mean to point out that His call to virginity was binding upon no man's conscience, and more entirely a matter of his free will than perhaps any other grace of God? The very perfection indeed of consecration to God is the absence of any command. He expresses a wish, and blessed is the man at whose hands God seems to ask a willing sacrifice, if he gives, as he is gently asked to give, wholly and entirely. The way in which Bernardine understood his vow of chastity is most significant. During his early years of religion it happened once, as he was begging from door to door, according to the custom of the Friars Minor, that a certain woman invited him as he passed to come in. When she had him in her power, she made known the real object of her invitation, which was to declare a guilty passion for Bernardine. The Saint stood and trembled, whilst he

besought God to give him light to deal with the temptation. Then he told the woman that to satisfy her evil desires, she must bare her shoulders, but no sooner had she complied than Bernardine quietly took his discipline, and gave her such a castigation as she never forgot. Her temptation disappeared so completely that in her whole subsequent life she never again experienced the same kind of assault.

At that time the Saint was at Capriola, a spot which he particularly loved and which continued to be the headquarters of his religious life. Capriola was situated near Siena in the midst of quiet country. Originally it had been a little hermitage, which had awakened Bernardine's innate love of solitude. He had begged it from the Hospital of Santa Maria di Scala for himself and some few of his companions, thus transforming it into a small foundation of the Observance. Virginity and humility are essentially Catholic virtues. They need the food of the sacraments and the bosom of Holy Church in order to expand unto their farthest limits, and where they seem to flourish in other communities we would suggest that it is among the Catholic at heart. The great preacher in his monastery was distinguished, so to speak, only by the absence of all distinction. The voice which thundered in the pulpit against vice sank to a gentle whisper when it became necessary to correct even inferiors at home. Once a good friar asked the Saint how he should best fulfill the duties of his state, and Bernardine, with a deep prostration, merely replied, "Down, down." At another time when questioned on his opinions of theology which he had been practically studying during his thirty-years' ministry, he answered, "Now I seem to understand it less than ever."

In striking contrast with the Saint's humility was his own conviction of the reality of his mission. On several occasions the popular voice designed him for a bishopric, and Siena in

particular was anxious to possess her son as a pastor. But Bernardine would never listen to any entreaties of the kind. The habit and poverty of Saint Francis were dearer to him than honour, and an active ministry was his call. If he had to choose, he said, he would rather live only five days and escape the bishopric, that free and without the episcopal responsibility he might hasten to the end of life's short day. The weight of pastoral cares was what he feared, not the labour of souls. Moreover, he added, as he was received with episcopal honours in every city which he entered, he would certainly fall in dignity if he became bishop of one. He preferred being bishop of all Italian cities.

There was a rumour once that Bernardine would have been elected Archbishop of Milan but for his refusal. To those who remonstrated he replied earnestly: "Do not think that I will change my elevated government for any episcopal dignity whatever." The Saint alluded this time to the Observance whereof he had been chosen Vicar in 1438. He and his friend Saint John Capistran were the two olive trees of this Reform which repaired the falling house of Saint Francis. In 1441 John succeeded him as its Vicar and inherited all and perhaps something more than his spiritual guide's own ardour for the work. At the time of Bernardine's admission to the Order, one hundred and thirty friars had been the whole number of Observants in Italy; at his death they numbered over four thousand. But however great this work may have been, and it was both great and important as a wide movement towards moral reformation, Bernardine's own ministry seems to have eclipsed it. Cardinal Gabriel, afterwards Eugenius IV, fearing that in the end the Saint might yield to the constant efforts which were made to lay upon him the pastoral charge, sent him privately a person of confidence, begging him not thus to forego the fruit of his labours. But Bernardine clasping the messenger's hand answered: "I give you my word that I will never be guilty of

the folly of yielding. Go and tell him (the Cardinal) what I say. Ask him to be quite at ease in what concerns me on this head."

One day when the question of his becoming Bishop of Siena was mooted for the first time, Bernardine called to him a very illiterate lay-brother, who was remarkable also for his purity of life and therefore dear to the Saint, and began with him a conversation after the fashion of Saint Philip's *e poi*.

"I have got something to tell you, dear Brother, which will be a source of lasting joy to us. The Sienese have unanimously chosen me as their Bishop. Is not this excellent news?"

"O Father," was the answer, "do not lose the fruit of so much labour in teaching the people, for a passing good."

"What then if the Milanese, by whom I am most loved and honoured, should wish me to be their Archbishop, would you make little of this too?"

"Truly, being a higher place, I say you ought to shun it with greater zest unless you would condemn yourself and all subsequent preachers of the truth to shame."

"And what," asked Bernardine again, "if the Sovereign Pontiff should make me a Patriarch, would you tell me that I should not willingly accept the dignity?"

"Now," cried the Brother in sorrow, "I see that you have been captivated by the vain things of this world which will make you lose the grace of God and the love of souls whom you had sought out with so much zeal."

"What if I become a Cardinal, do you think I ought to look down upon this honour too?"

"Here too, Father, there is little to be said, for who could not easily be enslaved by so high a dignity? Put an end to my suspense, Father, do what you mean to do."

But the Saint saw the good Brother had heard enough of his supposed schemes, and ended by saying "that the most eminent positions were also the most perilous and the most to be despised. For his part he would not exchange the habit of Saint Francis for any high place whatsoever, no, not even for the Papacy."

But Bernardine's beautiful life was drawing to a close; old in years, he was young in spirit with something of the vigour of eternity, because his treasure was centred upon that which the saints love in Heaven. "Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end," Saint John tells us of the Sacred Heart. The same was true in a proportionate degree of Bernardine of Siena. There is no sign of weakness or decay about his end, and it was his glory to die at last in full armour, as an earthly warrior might lay himself down to sleep after the battle with all the tokens of the fight around him. His biographers have closely followed him in his last months, when, they say, like the dying swan, he sang most sweetly.

It will be remembered that the Saint had spent his very early years at Massa, and in consideration; of the temporal life he had received in that city, it was one of the last places to call forth his apostolic zeal. There he preached the Lent of 1444, and one of those miracles into which he put so much of himself, if we may use the term, is recorded of him. Saints are characterized by their particular modes of working miracles. One day then after his sermon, a poor leper, a Spaniard by birth, approached Bernardine and begged him for some shoes to ease his tormented feet. Not having wherewith to give alms, the apostle took off his own sandals, and bestowed them upon the man. The leper went his way,

but the sandals consecrated by so many steps in the work of saving souls, proved stronger than the disease. The leprosy peeled off in scales of dry flesh, and the man found himself perfectly cured. He did not neglect the duty of gratitude, but returned to Massa to thank the master of the sandals. All that Bernardine stipulated for was silence. However, says the Spanish Chronicle, the closed mouths of his sores spoke louder than his tongue. In those days, as in the days of our Lord, the cure of a leper could not fail to be an event.

Bernardine's next halting-place was Siena. The Sienese indeed hoped that he would take up his last abode amongst them, as they were disposed to claim a natural relationship to Bernardine. The Saint however had far other thoughts, and was more than ever eager only for the interests of souls. At Spoleto the civil and ecclesiastical authorities received him with great honours, justifying to the last his half-earnest, half-playful remark that it was better to be Pope in every Italian city than Bishop in one. A woman there who had been paralyzed for six years was cured by Bernardine at the invocation of the Holy Name. Leaving Umbria he arrived at Rieti, where another triumphal reception awaited him. The people of Rieti seem to have deserved the commendations of the Saint who was so soon to die, for he gave them special praise as the children of his heart. A young girl was suffering from ulcers in the breast, the disease was declared absolutely hopeless, whilst fear of speedy mortification placed her life in imminent danger. At the Governor's request, the Saint read a portion of the Gospel of Saint John over the patient, and bade her parents be of good cheer, for their child would live. Probably Bernardine prayed at the same time that the fame of her cure might not be attributed to him, for it was only the next day when he had left the place, that the sickness entirely disappeared. Just a week before the end, it being the Thursday preceding the Ascension, he arrived at Falacrina.

There he preached his last sermon, and never, as it seemed to his auditors, had his words been at once more eloquent or more earnest. At that very time his body was so weighed down by mortal sickness that his capability of travelling was in itself alone a triumph of the higher over the lower nature. He was anxious to move on, for at Aquila, as his more than human knowledge told him, he would enter into the joy of his Lord. On the Saturday, whilst travelling on his ass, being overcome with thirst and fatigue, he asked his companions to help him to dismount and to get him a little water. The place was very dry, but a peasant who happened, to pass, guided them to a spring. When our Lord had partaken of the Last Supper, He told His disciples that He should not again taste wine till He came to His Father's Kingdom? Before that fountain in the cool and shady nook where no sound could be heard excepting the play of its waters, Bernardine rested for awhile, and he too might have said that it was for the last time. For him there was to be no more halting-place, but yet a few days, and endless joy and rest with God. The gentle murmuring of the fountain seemed to him like a *Sursum corda*; begging his companions to leave him to his solitude, he became rapt in God. He had a vision of Saint Peter Celestine, who foretold to him that they should share the patronage of Aquila.

On Sunday he arrived in a dying state at the city where he was to leave his earthly covering. A popular and turbulent insurrection had broken out against the nobility, but this, which meant good to be done, only served as a further enticement to the apostle of Italy. He found not peace but the sword, yet when his bodily voice had become for ever silent, his very death spoke peace. The Fathers of the Observance had no house in Aquila itself, and it was judged expedient to receive Bernardine in the monastery of the Conventuals as offering by its position more convenience for his treatment. A writer of our own time mentions what would

be a significant coincidence if it could be fully proved. The dying Bernardine, he says, was lodged in the cell of an absent friar, no other than Saint John Capistran, who inherited the spirit and labours of the Apostle of Italy, as Bernardine had succeeded to the Apostle of the Judgment. But Saint John was an Observant, and we do not see how he could have had a regular home in the monastery of Conventuals.

Aquila, in spite of its civil strife, resolved to send a deputation to Bernardine, for although the Saint declared he had come there to labour for the peace, and the prevention of those scandals which he had so often signalized, it soon became known that he was dying. After his death his words appear to have been answered in a most singular manner, as indeed the prayers of God's faithful servants alone are answered. "O my children," he exclaimed with his own vigorous fervour, "I admonish you to peace and harmony. My God, if I could buy this peace with my blood, how willingly I would offer the sacrifice to prevent scandals so pernicious, and put out the fire of vengeance with the blood of my veins. Receive, Lord, my desire, and if my blood can be accepted for peace, there is yet time. I make this offering with all my heart to Thy greater honour and glory."

In the meantime death brooked no further delay. The Saint called his confessor, Fra Bartolomeo of Siena, received the last sacraments of Holy Church, and begged that when his hour came, he might be placed upon ashes on the floor. On the evening of the 20th of May, 1444, whilst the Friars were chanting in Choir the verse, *Pater, manifestavi Nomen Tuum hominibus*, the lover and apostle of the Holy Name of Jesus passed away.

The miracles which followed this blessed death are no exception in the lives of the saints. Without delay God

publicly answered the petition which His servant had offered up on this side of the grave. After the ceremony of the funeral had been performed in the Cathedral, the holy corpse was carried back to the Franciscan church, and there exposed uncovered in a coffin in a chapel for the unusual time of twenty-six days. Placid and beautiful, Bernardine lay there in death, his body diffusing that particular fragrance which is known as the odour of sanctity, whilst the Italian cities, where he had preached, celebrated demonstrations in honour of their departed apostle. But all was not peace yet in Aquila. Whilst the body of Saint Bernardine still awaited burial, the party-spirit rose to so great a pitch that the different factions had recourse to arms, and the ungovernable enmity produced strife on both sides. The clergy and magistracy vainly interposed, when a voice in the air was distinctly heard to say: "Put down your arms: if you wish for blood, you will find wherewith to quench your thirst in the convent of Saint Francis." The Bishop mindful of the prodigies recently worked by Saint Bernardine, led off the conflicting parties in something like triumph to the spot named, and there indeed they found streams of blood flowing from the nostrils of the dead Saint. At the sight of the miracle the combatants forgot their enmity: in death they felt that Saint Bernardine's heart was still amongst them, and that the prayer of his failing lips: "My God, how willingly I would put out the fire of vengeance with the blood of my veins," had not been uttered in vain.

Surely we may claim for him a foremost place amongst the lovers of Italy. Others have sought for it intellectual fame, and advanced civilization, or have crowned it Queen of the Muses. Many of its children have sighed for its unity through the twilight of its slowly developed political history. Yet Bernardine surpassed all these patriots in proportion as the object of his labours was higher and nobler. Zeal for souls inspired the purest of sacrifices, life-long combats, self-

forgetfulness carried to its utmost limits. Who, indeed, loved Italy best? *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori* has more than its equivalent in the language of the Gospel: "Greater love than this no man hath that he giveth his life for his friend."

About This EBook

The text of this ebook is taken from the book *Three Catholic Reformers of the Fifteenth Century*, by Mary Helen Allies. The edition used was printed in London, England in 1878, and a scan of it is available at archive.org.

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